

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 4221

EO: 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB CO

SUBJ: PREPARATIONS FOR EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF ORIT

REF: STATE 84512

1. EMBASSY LABOFF DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL WITH UNION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) PRESIDENT TULIO CUEVAS APRIL 26. THE FOLLOWING ARE HIS VIEWS ON (A) ORIT DECENTRALIZATION; (B) FUTURE ORIT-ICFTU RELATIONS; (C) ORIT OFFICERS; AND (D) ORIT FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

2. (A) CUEVAS HAS LONG FAVORED A DECENTRALIZATION PROGRAM ALONG THE LINES REVIEWED IN REFTEL. HE IS NOT CONCERNED THAT DECENTRALIZATION MIGHT LEAD TO DEVELOPMENT OF SEVERAL "SPHERES OF INFLUENCE". BASIC PROBLEM IS PURPOSE OF DECENTRALIZATION. IF THE THREE REGIONAL OFFICES WOULD RECEIVE ADEQUATE FINANCING TO PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE STAFFING, THEN ORIT OR SUCCESSOR ORGANIZATION WOULD BE MORE EFFICIENT. OTHERWISE, THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO CHANGE ORIT STRUCTURE. (B) CUEVAS BELIEVES AFL-CIO DEFEATED ICFTU ATTEMPTS LAST OCTOBER TO LESSEN AFL-CIO INFLUENCE IN ORIT. NOW THAT THE EUROPEANS HAVE LEARNED THEIR LESSON, HE HOPES THAT "LATINS, AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS CAN WORK TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN ORIT". (C) CUEVAS AGREES WITH IDEA EXPRESSED PARA 12, REFTEL, THAT ORIT SECRETARY GENERAL ETCHEVERRY IS ON HIS WAY OUT. PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS FINDING SUITABLE REPLACEMENT. NOBODY OF VALUE WILL COME FORWARD UNLESS HE HAS REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT. FINANCING IS CRUCIAL TO THE FUTURE OF ORIT. (D) CONFIDENTIAL

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CUEVAS SAID HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT RELUCTANCE OF THE AFL-CIO TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY ORIT CONGRESS. UNTIL 1974, THE AFL-CIO WAS THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF ORIT FUNDS. THE DECISION OF THE AFL-CIO TO REDUCE ITS SUPPORT OF ORIT PROVIDED

THE ICFTU WITH THE OPPORTUNITY LAST OCTOBER TO ATTEMPT TO OUST THE AFL-CIO FROM ITS WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFILIATE. SINCE THE AFL-CIO, WITH LATIN SUPPORT, WON THIS CONFRONTATION, FAILURE OF THE AFL-CIO TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL CONGRESS WOULD MAKE IT APPEAR TO THE LATINS AS IF THE AMERICAN INTEREST WAS ONLY IN KEEPING THE EUROPEANS OUT. THIS MIGHT PRODUCE ANOTHER OPENING FOR THE EUROPEANS. THE IDEAL WOULD BE FOR THE VENEZUELAN LABOR CONFEDERATION (CTV), THE ICFTU AND THE AFL-CIO TO SPLIT THE COSTS. REALISTICALLY, HE SAID, THESE ARE THE ONLY ORGANIZATIONS WITH ENOUGH MONEY TO CONTRIBUTE MORE THAN A TOKEN AMOUNT. THE AFL-CIO MUST REALIZE THAT THE LATIN CONFEDERATIONS ARE POOR. IF THEY COULD DO MORE, THEY WOULD NOT NEED AFLD ASSISTANCE.

3. CUEVAS SAID HE LOOKS FORWARD TO DISCUSSING ORIT MATTERS WITH AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVE MCLELLAN IN MID-MAY WHEN THE LATTER WILL VISIT COLOMBIA IN THE OPERATION SOLIDARITY PROGRAM.
VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

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